

SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

Editorial Opinions of the Leading Journals Upon Current Topics—Compiled Every Day for the Evening Telegraph.

THE FUTURE OF PARTIES.

From the N. Y. Times.

The tone of the President's Message and of the opening debates in Congress sufficiently indicates the future policy of the Republican party...

These are praiseworthy purposes. They embody that which is most essential in a republican government. But they make no appeal whatever to passion or to popular vanity...

We have employed the phrase "a party of great moral ideas," for nothing can be more descriptive of the Republican organization, of the impassioned zeal with which it will fight for a principle...

We argue, therefore, that the Republicans are in a position altogether different from any they have occupied during the sixteen years of that wonderful career...

This is a sorrowful statement; for it involves a confession that many good men only support a cause in its emergencies; but many weak men desert it except under the stimulus of high example...

How will it be in 1872, when all these causes in both parties will combine to control another Presidential election? The Democracy will have no record save that of the vilest and most thievish of State and municipal governments...

Moreover, the income tax scarcely touches agriculture, the most extensive and most thriving interest in the country. The rise in the value of farms is as inaccessible to this form of taxation as the enhancement of unimproved real estate...

TINKERING THE TARIFF.

From the N. Y. Tribune.

If there be one among the many excellent suggestions embodied in the President's first Annual Message which, above all others, stamps him as a man of practical good sense, it is that in which he counsels Congress to let the tariff alone until the arduous task of funding our great national debt at a lower rate of interest shall have been virtually accomplished...

country, no great interest, nor any political party, feels that it has any stake in the perpetuation of the present state of the law. It is a mere question of revenue, pure and simple, having nothing in it that can enlist party feeling on one side or the other.

We have recently set forth some of the reasons why an income tax operates more unequally and oppressively in this country than it does in Great Britain, showing that a difference of circumstances renders the British precedent inapplicable to this country.

The strength of denunciation with which Mr. Bright assailed the income tax of Great Britain, and his vigorous, almost indignantly protests against its gross inequality and injustice, should arrest the zeal of its advocates in this country, who have little to stand upon but the British precedent, and who fancy that the British tax is regarded as equitable.

It is incredible to our Government that reasoning so flimsy and inconsequent as this should be put forth in a public document. Mr. Delano defends the income tax on the ground that it is paid by the bondholders whose property is otherwise exempted from taxation.

Mr. Delano defends it on the ground that it is a tax on "the increased wealth of individuals from investments." "After all," he says, "it is but a tax upon the increased wealth of the nation. If this were true, and all the increased wealth of the country contributed in equal proportions, the tax would be justifiable. But it is not true. A large part of it is levied on salaries which are barely sufficient to meet the current wants of the recipients. It is not a tax upon their increased wealth, but upon their scanty means of living. The payers of this part of the income tax are no better off at the end of the year than they were at the beginning. Instead of being paid out of their accumulations, it curtails their ordinary comforts."

That large part of the increase of the national wealth which comes with the least exertion is not touched by the income tax at all. We refer to the hundreds of millions of dollars invested in this country by shrewd, wealthy men in unimproved real estate, which is constantly rising in value, but yielding no tangible income as long as it remains unsold. There is no class in our country who are so rapidly increasing in wealth as the investors in such property, and yet they pay no income tax, while people who make money by their activity and industry, and who are the real creators of the increased value of such investments, bear all the burden. Nothing could be more unjust than a law which thus exempts accumulations which come without exertion, and taxes the uncertain profits of the business, and the precarious salaries of individuals who have no resource when sickness or the caprice of employers puts a stop to their earnings.

Moreover, the income tax scarcely touches agriculture, the most extensive and most thriving interest in the country. The rise in the value of farms is as inaccessible to this form of taxation as the enhancement of unimproved real estate. The food of the farmer's family, raised on his own land, escapes entirely, while that large part of other incomes which is expended for food pays the full five per cent. No tax is endurable which is levied with such glaring disregard of equity.

As there is no reason why a renewal of this unjust tax should be made a party question, we would fain hope that it may be permitted to die a natural death with the expiration of the present law.

FROM THE N. Y. WORLD.

The unjust and odious income tax differs from the other fiscal questions which challenge the consideration of this Congress in its freedom from entanglement with collateral subjects. It is an acknowledged excessiveness in our financial system; having been originally enacted for a limited period, and its continuance being recommended by the President, at a reduced rate, only for another limited period of three years. It differs from the currency question and the tariff question in the fact that no particular section of the

subject to redemption. The advance of their price in London directly on the receipt of the President's Message foreshadows the result of a hearty concurrence by Congress in the leading suggestions of the Executive. A bonafide revenue in question; for without such a revenue the purchase and retiring of bonds must soon be arrested. Our present tariff and internal taxes afford the weekly and monthly incomes required—very nearly twenty-four millions per month. Of these, ten millions (gold) are required to pay the interest on our debt. Over two millions more are required for pensions; the cost of running the Government cannot be brought below eight millions (currency) per month and are left to be employed in buying up the principal of our debt after the surplus in the Treasury shall have been drawn down to its proper level. This is as little as will answer. The income tax expires by limitation with the year just before us; if renewed, it will, as General Grant recommends, be reduced; so that, until our debt be funded, and the heavy burden of its interest lightened, we have no revenue to spare, and we beg Congress not to let any go. Fund the five-twenties at four-and-a-half per cent. (it should be four), and we shall have twenty millions per annum saved by that process; and we can reduce our taxes by that amount, yet keep on paying off debt as before.

We understand that the House Committee of Ways and Means have substantially agreed that the right thing to do with the tariff, when the time shall have arrived for doing anything, is to extend the free list. That seems a wise conclusion. A very long list may be made of articles now subject to various duties which together afford very little income to the Treasury, while the trouble and expense of assessing and collecting duties upon them are very considerable. We presume a hundred articles might be added to the free list without reducing the net receipts from customs; and two hundred more at a cost but a few millions of revenue. At a proper time we shall favor and urge such extension of the free list.

Shall coal be placed in that list? We hope it may, for reasons quite other than those commonly urged by the advocates of "free coal." New England will obtain some coal from Nova Scotia a little cheaper than she now does; our gas-company "rings" will make a little more money out of their Nova Scotia coal-mines than they now do; but that they will give to their customers either cheaper or better gas, this dependent, not knowing, can't say. "Southward and westward of the Delaware," "free coal" will amount to just nothing at all, save the loss of \$750,000 per annum to the Treasury.

READ BOTH SIDES!

From the St. Louis Democrat.

We see now what a man may come to who depends entirely upon the New York Tribune for information. Mr. Beecher's defense of his course in the marriage and at the funeral of Mr. Richardson, and of his very strange language, prejudging a criminal case, declaring the wife and the deceased utterly blameless, and denouncing the imprisoned husband, was that he had not read the papers about the case, and depended for his information upon the editors of the Tribune. Now the editors who informed him are very honest and worthy persons, but like all other human beings, they are sometimes influenced in their judgments by personal feeling, sympathy or prejudice. It was at the house of one of the editors of that paper, it appears, that Mrs. McFarland, while yet undivorced, received many visits from Mr. Beecher, and at that house, still being the wife of another, she occupied with Richardson adjoining rooms, there being no room between them. It was there that she was seen by a servant to put her arms about his neck and kiss him—though still the wife of another. Another of the editors of the Tribune was the principal witness in obtaining the divorce, and came from New York to Indiana for that purpose. No blame to her for that! It was not only right, it was her duty to testify to the facts. But her prominence on that occasion rendered it quite natural that the sympathies of Mrs. Calhoun were with the wife, and it was Mrs. Calhoun who applied to Mr. Beecher to solemnize the marriage. Had Mr. Beecher known that the divorce was obtained in Indiana, simply because there was not alleged to be any ground for it under the laws of New York, he might have hesitated before speaking so strongly as he did. But, as he says, he relied entirely upon statements made to him by his friends of the Tribune, and with that paper Mr. Richardson was connected. Did it never occur to the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher that in such a case it would be well to hear both sides?

Not because his informants were not trustworthy, but because they were partisans in the nature of the case—because their natural sympathies were strong! The informants upon whom Mr. Beecher relied on his statements he had reason to have great confidence. But what of us all is not liable to be warped in judgment by personal feeling? To say that the editors of the Tribune may have been, is not to question their integrity—it is simply to say that they were human. Knowing that they were human, and knowing their natural sympathies, Mr. Beecher would have done wisely had he insisted upon reading both sides. He did not, and is in trouble.

Good people and honest people get into trouble in exactly the same way every day. They hear one side of a story, are content with that, and instantly become violent partisans. If the truth happens to be against them, of course they are angry. But it serves them right. They ought to have read both sides. No man has any business to shirk the responsibility of having an opinion of his own. If he hears one side only, he accepts the opinion of somebody else, and suffers his influence to be used as a tool by another. Mr. Beecher's possession of large influence imposes on him commensurate responsibility, which he cannot shake off. So every man or woman who has influence, be it large or small, is bound to direct it by an independent opinion, not borrowed from any partisan, but formed from a knowledge of the case. And the case always means more than one side of the story.

But it is a prevailing vice of the times to permit somebody else to do our thinking for us; to hear one side, adopt that, and not infrequently to refuse to hear any other, with a fierce bigotry proportioned to the narrowness of information in which it originates. Men who hear only one side are always bigots. Mr. Beecher would never have blazed out so violently against those who criticized him if he had known the whole truth. Exactly the same spirit is engendered in politics. "I won't have the nasty thing in my house!" said a radical of a Democratic sheet, able and well edited, but villainously wrong in politics. Unhappy man! his was not the radicalism of reason. He borrowed it of somebody, and therefore was afraid to hear both sides. The radicals are scarce, we hope, who are guilty of such stupidity, but we honestly fear that there are few Democrats who read both sides,

and a great many who read not even one. Of course they are still more intolerant, and being absolute fools, politically, rave about the necessity of shooting folks who do not agree with them.

New questions are coming up for discussion. Men are forming—or borrowing—opinions. We wish every man could take to himself seriously the lesson of Beecher's blunder, and resolve to hear both sides before surrendering himself a captive to either. The man who hears only one does not form his own opinion; he has it crammed into him, as we put dressing into a turkey. And the men who do not form their own opinions are not voters, but voting cattle. Somebody drives the leader with a ball—no leader, not uncommonly being ridden by somebody else, with purposes of his own.

"Men and brethren," as Horace says, let us each do his own thinking! And to that end let us hear both sides. So may we avoid the unhappy predicament into which this same Horace and sundry others have drawn poor Beecher—that of finding himself chief champion of a cause the merits of which he has not investigated! How painful it must be to be leading advocate in a case one knows nothing about!

De your own thinking! Nobody who buys his opinions as he does his steak at the meat shop, ready cut for use, can be said to have any opinion of his own. The butcher may be a very reliable person, but even from him we like to buy only after comparing and selecting what is best. If, unfortunately, your thinking apparatus does not produce independent thought, and you are forced to depend on some intellectual meatshop for ideas, at least exercise a man's faculty of choosing for yourself! Hear both sides and choose.

ABUSE OF THE FRANKING PRIVILEGE.

From the N. Y. Herald.

The franking privilege enjoyed by Congress has long been justly investigated against by the entire newspaper press of the country. The system in itself would not be so bad or so condemnatory, however, were it not that it leads to such abuses as has drawn upon it universal odium. In his excellent message to Congress and to the country President Grant assures the people of an administration of economy and retrenchment in all the departments of the Government under his special charge. It is to be hoped that Congress will keep step with the Executive in this course of retrenchment and economy, and that the first earnest of its good intentions in this regard will be to abolish the franking privilege altogether, or institute a reform in the present system which will render impossible the frauds upon the Post Office Department, to which it is now notoriously subject.

The abuse of the privilege has gone so far that not even the semblance of the autograph of a Representative or a Senator is necessary to frank letters to the most distant parts of the Union. In Washington not one person in a thousand ever stamps a letter mailed in the Post Office. It is all the same whether Congress be sitting or not, from the fact that members while in Washington, by means of engraved stamps, flood the city with their autographs, which hold good all the term of their offices and for years after they are dead—of which there have been instances. Not only mail bags of letters are thus fraudulently transmitted through the Post Office, but tons of Congressional reports and documents and such heavy matter, that is never read, but which involves the Post Office Department in great expense and encumbers the mails and often retards their prompt transmission from point to point.

Congress, perhaps for want of a little good advice in the matter, has hitherto persistently and continuously refused to abolish their privilege of franking letters and Congressional documents, notwithstanding all the abuses which we have pointed out as attaching thereto, and which have never been denied as existing. Now we propose once more that the privilege be abolished, but not without offering a substitute in its place. Here it is. Let there be a law passed granting to members of Congress while engaged in their Congressional duties postage stamps for all proper and necessary purposes, the Postmaster-General to keep a record of the amount of stamps thus contributed by his department, designating the quantity allowed to each Representative and Senator. If Congress is imbued with any of the political wisdom of General Grant, who first in his own administration of affairs promised economy and retrenchment and recommends the same much needed policy to the legislative branch of the Government, it will surely move in the matter and act at once upon our suggestion. With our suggestion the economists and reformers in Congress can once more direct their efforts to the removal of the abuses of the franking privilege. The opponents of the change must be few, as opposition to such a just and economic measure would assuredly bring down on members the obloquy and odium of their constituents.

The change which we here propose in the franking system would embrace all the departments of the Government, civil and military. The check to an undue and extravagant use or misappropriation of postage stamps would lie in the fact that the Postmaster-General in his annual report to the President for submission to Congress and the country would be required to make a return of the amount of stamps supplied to each Senator and Representative. In the same way he would designate the amount consumed by the heads of the various departments, and thus would be insured not only a redress of the present great abuses of the franking privilege, but would show the extent to which the Post Office Department would be entitled to credit for its share in the performance of the great work of government.

FRAUDS OF NAVY PAYMASTERS.

From the N. Y. Sun.

We notice that Secretary Robeson has neglected to make any change in the system of settling the accounts of navy paymasters. This oversight is rather singular, inasmuch as the Sun has already called attention to the fact that eight or ten paymasters are defalcators, and that the defalcations are defalcations of \$100,000. Washington, Forbes, and Parker amount, in the aggregate to nearly a half million dollars, and possibly more. Every one outside of the department is fully advised of those extraordinary deficits, and yet it seems that nothing is to be done to prevent their repetition whenever unprincipled paymasters choose to use the funds of the United States to pay their little bills. Under the present loose and rotten system, there seems to be no way of detecting such irregularities until they have become so serious that the law officers of the Government must be called in to institute proceedings against the bondsmen of the offenders. The criminal is allowed to sink deeper and deeper into the quicksand, and finally disappears from sight altogether, before a single step is taken to protect the Government.

A paymaster, whether from ignorance or original intent, is permitted to misappropri-

ate Government funds for years; and when his accounts are rendered, instead of being promptly and thoroughly examined and passed, they are placed in a pigeon-hole, after the good old-fashioned, careless, rapt style, there to slumber for one, two, or three years before they are brought to the light of investigation, when they may be found to be utterly bad and incorrect. Meanwhile the guilty party has been ordered to duty again on a foreign cruise, and cannot be reached for the moment to explain the ugly discrepancies that appear on his final reckoning. He is formally notified that he is a debtor to the Treasury Department so many thousand dollars. He responds to this announcement by quietly taking, from his strong box the necessary sum and remitting it to the Treasury, and by his present cruise he is safe. He practically robs Peter to pay Paul, and Uncle Sam is put off. The upshot of the affair is that the bondsmen pay the deficit so far as they are holden, and the Government loses the balance.

This sad state of affairs is owing entirely to the worthless system of settling accounts which the Government adopts. No one department controls the final reckoning of the disbursing agents in the navy. The Navy Department settles the accounts for clothing, provisions, and supplies, while the Treasury controls the monetary expenditures. Between the two there is no close connection or intimacy. Each one looks for his own, and gives no care for the other.

Millions of dollars are doubtless now at stake, and yet there is no way or probability of ascertaining how much is due to the Government from its paymasters or financial agents. Until the auditors of the Treasury or of the Navy Department have entire control of the disbursements of the navy officers, there will be no means of reaching final results in a satisfactory way to the Treasury. In justice to paymasters, too, there ought to be a prompt and frequent settlement of accounts; for frequently, after an interval of two or three years, the only persons who can authenticate them are dead or out of reach, so that paymasters are sacrificed to the delay and recklessness of the Government.

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PHILADELPHIA, Pa., Nov. 2, 1899.

NOTICE TO STOCKHOLDERS.

The Board of Directors has this day declared a semi-annual dividend of FIVE PER CENT on the Capital Stock of the Company, clear of National and State taxes, payable in cash on or before November 3, 1899.

Blank Powers of Attorney for collecting dividends can be had at the office of the Company, No. 326 THIRD Street.

The office will be opened at 9 A. M., and closed at 3 P. M., from November 2, 1899, to December 1, 1899.

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THOS. T. FIRTH, Treasurer.

OFFICE OF THE LEHIGH COAL AND NAVIGATION COMPANY.

PHILADELPHIA, December 8, 1899.

Coupons due the 15th instant on the Gold Loan of this company will be paid at their office, in gold, on and after that date. Holders of ten or more coupons can obtain receipts therefor prior to that date. S. SHEPHERD, Treasurer. 12 87

FARMERS' AND MECHANICS' NATIONAL BANK.

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The Annual Election for Directors of this Bank will be held at the Banking House on WEDNESDAY, the 12th day of January next, between the hours of 11 o'clock A. M. and 2 o'clock P. M.

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